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SOME BOOKS ON THEOLOGY

DR. MCKIM'S "THE PROBLEM OF THE PENTATEUCH"¹

Signs are not wanting that a distinct reaction has set in against the conclusions of the extreme wing of the "Higher Critics" of the Old and New Testaments and against the principles upon which their criticism is based. This extreme or radical school is represented by such well-known names as Kuenen and Wellhausen. Back of their critical processes lie certain fundamental theological and philosophical postulates. Their theological basis is that of naturalistic Rationalism; their philosophical basis (in many cases, at least) is the Hegelian assumption of impersonal "tendencies" as the determining factors in history. "Wellhausen," for example, "holds that the Israelitish religion, so far from having its origin in a divine revelation, as the Bible asserts, worked itself up by degrees out of heathenism; and Kuenen affirms that the Jewish and Christian religions are no more entitled to be considered of supernatural origin than Buddhism or Islamism" (p. 68). Precisely similar assumptions, theological and philosophical, underlay the New Testament criticism of Strauss and Baur and the Tübingen school of half a century or more ago. But the conclusions of those critics of the New Testament have long since been thoroughly discredited, and we find the great historian Harnack (in the famous Preface to his *Chronologie der Altchristlichen Literatur*) stating the following as the conclusion to which scholarship has been led in regard to the early documents of Christianity: "After characterizing our time as one in which the New Testament writing had been treated as a tissue of illusions and falsifications (Harnack), declared that, for critical science, that time was past; that the net result of its investigations was that the tradition of the Church in regard to the early Christian literature was in the main reliable; and that that literature was for the most part

¹THE PROBLEM OF THE PENTATEUCH: AN EXAMINATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM. By Randolph McKim, D.D., LL.D. With a Foreword by the Dean of Canterbury. Longmans, 1906.

veracious and trustworthy" (pp. 35, 36). But now the school of radical New Testament critics has been succeeded by a school of equally radical critics of the Old Testament, who are endeavoring to establish such negative and destructive conclusions as would in effect subvert the divine origin and authority of the religion of ancient Israel. In this great controversy Dr. McKim does not assume the rôle of a judge, but rather that of one of the jurors. He frankly admits himself to be "neither an Orientalist nor a Hebraist, nor an archæologist, nor an expert in literary analysis." But he reminds his readers "that both Wellhausen, the oracle, and Robertson Smith, his interpreter, nearly a century ago, undertook to appeal their cause from the court of the Orientalist, the linguist, and the expert scholar, to the forum of opinion over which commonsense presides. The "Prolegomena" of the former addresses itself to "the mass of Bible readers." The argument is declared to be "within the scope of any one who reads the English Bible carefully, and is able to think clearly." A similar view has been recently expressed by an eminent scholar in relation to the most burning of New Testament problems. "The only thing to be done," he says, "is for each of us to state his view of the case as he sees it, and to appeal to the public, as the jury of plain men . . . to decide between the competing theories."²

But, while Dr. McKim's attitude is a conservative one, it is not that of an unintelligent or obscurantist conservatism. "I am not contending," says he, "against the documentary hypothesis. There is much to be said in favor of the theory of the composite character of the books of the Pentateuch. Neither do I hold a brief for the traditional view of the Mosaic authorship. It is, I conceive, a legitimate subject of inquiry how far these books, in the form that we have them now (*sic*), proceeded from the hand of Moses, provided they are accepted as authentic accounts of the transactions they record. Nor yet am I arguing the question of how far allegory may be made a legitimate vehicle of divine revelation. In my judgment it is an

² Rev. Wm. Sanday, D.D., "The Criticism of The Fourth Gospel." Quoted by Dr. McKim in his Introduction (pp. 3, 4).

entire mistake to suppose that the value of the narrative of the Fall, in the Book of Genesis, is dependent upon its being accepted as literal history. If we suppose it to be an allegory and not history, the teaching it embodies is just as important; is, in fact, just the same. This view was held by many of the early Christian fathers. Gregory of Nyssa describes the account of Paradise and the Fall as 'ideas in the form of a story.' On this occasion I make no affirmation, in regard to these several points. I wish only to make it clear that, in challenging the Wellhausen hypothesis, of the books and of the history, these questions are not involved one way or the other" (pp. 74,75).

Dr. McKim well says, "The method (of these extreme critics) is inadequate. It is based predominantly on philology, and philology cannot furnish sufficient support — broad enough and deep enough — for so weighty a superstructure. History and archæology must also be used as foundation stones. . . . Like considerations," Dr. McKim continues, "were urged by Dean Milman more than a generation ago to the critical theories then in vogue. What he wrote of them may be applied to the Graf-Wellhausen theory:

" 'There seems to be a fatal fallacy in the groundwork of much of their argument. Their minute inferences and conclusions drawn from slight premises, seem to presuppose an antiquity and perfect accuracy in the existing text, not in itself probable, and certainly utterly inconsistent with the general principles of their criticism. They are in this respect, in this alone, almost at one with the most rigid adherent of verbal inspiration. . . . The argument from language appears to me to be equally insecure, and to be used with great caution and judgment. . . . This criticism must always bear in mind the uncertainty of the received text, which on its own principles. . . . it is bound to admit' " (pp. 92, 93).

We are to remember that the question as to the date and authorship of certain books, or parts of books, of the Old Testament is a question entirely distinct from that of the origin and development of the institutions of Israel's worship and polity. In other words, the *literary* question is to a large extent distinct from the *historical* question. And of the two, the historical ques-

tion appears to be the one of preponderating importance. In this connection, it is a fact not to be overlooked that the earlier assumptions of the extreme rationalistic critics must now be revised and corrected in view of the remarkable, nay, wonderful discoveries made in recent years in the field of Babylonian and Assyrian archæology.

The following analogy drawn by Dr. McKim and the argument which it contains are of striking significance: "For my own part," he says, "I avow that I would as soon believe that the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de Milo were each the work of twenty or thirty sculptors in different epochs of ancient history, and that our modern expert artists could mark off the parts of those masterpieces which were wrought by each, as I will believe that the exquisite story of Joseph and his brethren (to take but a single example) — a veritable masterpiece of literary art — was the work of a score or more of authors and 'redactors' and that our clever professors of literary anatomy can dissect it, verse by verse, and clause by clause, and distribute the fragments severally to their various writers and compilers" (p. 79).

Perhaps the most central and vital part of Dr. McKim's argument in opposition to the extreme criticism is that which is concerned with the date and origin of the fifth book of the Pentateuch — the Book of Deuteronomy. "The Deuteronomy problem," says he, "may be considered the pivot of the whole theory against which I contend" (p. 107). Wellhausen, as is well known, identifies this book with the "book of the law" which was discovered in the Temple by Hilkiyah, the high priest, in the reign of Josiah, about 621 B. C. (See II Kings XXII).

Dr. McKim contends for the traditional view, that Deuteronomy, in substance, at least, goes back to a period much anterior to the reign of Josiah, and that the materials of which it is composed may, in large part, date from the time of the great legislator, Moses himself. Wellhausen's view, though supported by Driver, "is stoutly contested by such scholars as Klostermann, Hommel, Köhler, Robertson and Delitzsch" (p. 116).

Enough has been said to show the value and timeliness of Dr. McKim's latest book. Its author combines clearness and vigor of style with trenchant force of argument. His temper, more-

over, is judicial; he bears no undue animus against the scholars whose views he is opposing, and of whom, though disagreeing *toto coelo* with their conclusions, he yet speaks with unfailing urbanity and respect. The book is a worthy contribution to Biblical literature, and will still further enhance the reputation of its distinguished author.

HALL'S INTRODUCTION TO DOGMATIC THEOLOGY³

This is the first volume of a series which, as projected by its author, is intended to cover the whole field of Systematic Divinity, from an Anglican, or, to be more exact, from an Anglo-Catholic standpoint. The delicate and difficult subject of the relations of Anglicanism to Catholicity are discussed with considerable fullness (mainly in Chapter VII, under the title "Provincialism"), as are also the relations of Anglicanism to "passing thought." The author's standpoint is as frankly Catholic as it is frankly dogmatic. In regarding Anglicanism as a provincial section of the Catholic Church, possessing and exercising rights of jurisdiction and legislation within its own area, yet in organic connection with the Greek and Roman branches of Catholicity, he ignores any real ecclesiastical or vital relations as subsisting between Anglican Christianity on the one side, and the various Protestant Communions on the other. In regard to this "branch" theory, as it has been called, which to a large extent has become popularised in Anglican circles through the influence of the Oxford Movement, the question inevitably occurs whether the Church of England — or the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country — has succeeded any better in establishing organic ecclesiastical relations with the Greek and Roman Communions than she has with the various Protestant bodies.

Again, as regards dogma, Prof. Hall's position seems to be, in all essentials, that of St. Thomas Aquinas, interpreted and applied with reference to modern conditions. The un-Protestant character of the work is seen in the subordinate place to which Dr.

³ INTRODUCTION TO DOGMATIC THEOLOGY. By the Rev. Francis J. Hall, D.D., Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Western Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. Longmans.

Hall assigns the science of Scriptural interpretation, or exegesis as compared with dogmatic theology (pp.12,13). The interpretation of the Bible is to be conducted in obedience to the dogmatic rulings of the Ecumenical Church. Within these limitations, the book is of real and considerable value. It is clearly and forcibly written. We confess, however, to a feeling of regret that the strong and positive presentation of dogma, so much needed at the present time, should be discounted by so much that is distinctly mediæval and opposed to evangelical freedom and progress.

We have been especially interested in the chapter on the Natural and the Supernatural, in which the burning questions of Revelation and Miracle are treated with special reference to recent discussions. The book is thoroughly in touch with the present day conditions and controversies. Prof. Hall is no "closet theologian." He keeps a close watch upon the developments of contemporary thought, as was shown by his activity in connection with the "Crapsey case" last year. Of the validity, adequacy and authority of the doctrinal system for which he stands, Dr. Hall has not the slightest doubt or question. This conviction gives to his work a certain incisiveness and vigor which cannot fail to impress many minds, and to win for him a considerable following. There are some who think, and who frankly express the opinion that the Anglican Church has no distinctive theology of her own. Dr. Hall's position, in spite of his catena of dogmatic pronouncements, does not differ from this so widely as might at first sight be supposed. For he endorses Newman's principle of interpreting distinctively Anglican formularies as in essential accordance with Roman theology [the Council of Trent]. (See page 188).

It is, however, to be hoped that Dr. Hall's teaching in its practical effect will prove to be less un- or anti-Protestant than might be inferred from his theoretical standpoint. Evangelical teaching and the spirit of Protestant liberty have once for all been admitted into the Church of England, and consciously or unconsciously modify and color the writings even of those who would themselves most strongly repudiate the title "Protestant."

SEEBERG'S "HISTORY OF DOCTRINES"⁴

Professor Seeberg's work is a scholarly and useful manual, wherein may be traced the course of theological development in the Church from the Apostles' time down to and including the period of the Reformation. It has the merits of clearness and succinctness, while at the same time it is based upon ample and thorough research. We have examined with especial interest the section treating of Greek Christianity in its distinctive features and characteristic development; those which deal with St. Augustine's relation to the growth of the conceptions of Church and Sacraments, and of his doctrines touching Sin and Grace; also those dealing with the genesis and development of Protestant doctrine in the sixteenth century. As might have been expected, the treatment of the theology of Luther is especially full and complete. The work as a whole is characterized by sympathy, insight, moderation and balance, and may be commended either as a text-book or as a book of reference for use in theological schools.

DR. INGE'S IDEALISM AND MYSTICISM⁵

Dr. Inge, recently appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Cambridge University, has won his way to recognition as one of the most penetrating and influential thinkers in the Anglican Church to-day. While appearing to emphasize the intellectual side of religion rather than its purely spiritual side, at the same time as a champion of the primacy of intellect and an opponent of Pragmatism, he has made himself felt on behalf of the rights and claims of reason in religious thought. Dr. Inge is opposed to the idea that the sum total of religious truth can be interpreted by purely ethical categories. He says (p. 18): "I believe that the determination to find in God's government of the world the rule of a moralist pure and simple has been a great

⁴ TEXT-BOOK OF THE HISTORY OF DOCTRINES. (Two Volumes). By Dr. Reinhold Seeberg, Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin. Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society.

⁵ PERSONAL IDEALISM AND MYSTICISM. By William Ralph Inge, M.A., D.D. Longmans, 1907. (The Bishop Paddock Lectures for 1906).

obstacle to understanding the actual laws under which we live. These laws, we must believe, contain nothing *contrary* to the moral goodness of the Creator; but I repeat that I can see nothing derogatory to the character of God in supposing that other considerations, besides those which we call moral, have entered into their texture." And again (p. 21.): "The over-confidence and optimism of the great scientists in the middle of the nineteenth century have been followed by a vehement reaction against the religion of nature. It is almost denied that nature bears any impress of the Creator's character. . . . For my own part," Dr. Inge goes on to say (p. 25), "I believe that the Platonists and Wordsworth are right, and Lotze wrong. I agree with Scotus Erigena that 'every visible and invisible creature is a theophany,' and with Charles Kingsley that 'all symmetrical natural objects are types of some spiritual truth and existence.'"

Personality is interpreted by Dr. Inge in a somewhat mystical manner. He takes strong ground, and we believe rightly, against what he calls "skeptical orthodoxy," i. e. the attitude which seeks to hold to religious truth by the faculty of faith working by *will*, while professing itself speculatively and intellectually agnostic. Loisy on the one hand, and Hermann and the Ritschlians on the other, are weighed in the balances and found philosophically wanting.

If we were to offer any criticism upon Dr. Inge's own position, it would be that he appears to give an over-intellectualistic interpretation of Christianity. Plotinus is to him one of the greater prophets. The interpretation of Christ as Reason (Logos) seems to be for Professor Inge the ultimate *goal*, rather than, as with St. John, the *means* to the interpretation of the Incarnation and the redemptive work of the Son of God. Consequently, it is the philosophy of religion rather than theology proper that one finds in Dr. Inge's brilliant pages. One is therefore hardly surprised to find that the least satisfactory lecture is that which deals with The Problem of Sin.

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